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## PACIFISM : IS ITS MORAL FOUNDATION POSSIBLE OR NEEDED?\*

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The gods of war have always occupied a higher social position than the gods of peace. However, the value of social peace has always been the main source of pacifistic feelings and movements which express moral condemnation of war and violence. Although individuals, nations and humankind as a whole have, as W. James noted, acquired a substantial part of their identity through the risks, glory and agony of their wars, it has nevertheless been established as something obvious, for instance, explicitly by Hesiod, that peaceful and constructive work, as a crucial presupposition of human happiness, is possible only in the state of peace. However, that state does not come of itself. One has to struggle for its establishment and preservation. Difficulties in giving a general characterisation of pacifism are not hard to conceive, for the pacifist standpoint includes not only various doctrines, as Narveson has observed,<sup>1</sup> but also different social movements and individual standpoints. Yet, there is one common characteristic of pacifism, that can be ascribed to it with certainty: it is in a way the standpoint which both involves and denies being in counterposition. Pacifism is the standpoint of protest, opposition and resistance that paradoxically aims at abstinence from physical violence. Pacifist standpoint is an attitude towards violence, in particular war-violence. That attitude is expressed in the refusal to respond to violence with (physical) force, which in the last resort implies the denial of the validity of those principles which justify (self)-defence, punishment and prevention of crime. At the level of the individual, pacifism, as a moral standpoint, is based on a specific Weltanschauung which includes not only the principle that violence has an intrinsic negative value but also the principle that attributes an absolute value to human life. This characterisation may have a much more stringent form, that regards even ordinary unkindness and the use of relatively harmless violence as absolutely forbidden. At the social level, the pacifist standpoint generates collective feelings with a tendency towards social institutionalisation, in the form of various movements, sects, etc. Nowadays, at this level, there is a specific narrowing of the meaning of the term 'pacifism' so that it denotes various forms of peace-activities which aim at disarmament, activities which specifically oppose war-violence and even particular types of war, e.g., nuclear, chemical or biological.

However, many contemporary movements, such as movements against nuclear arms, that are inappropriately labelled 'pacifist', for those movements are not always against violence as such, and often are not peace-movements at all.

Yet, among the positions that can be legitimately called pacifistic, special significance must be given to those which are specifically war-oriented, i.e., to the peace-movements. Although a significant amount of their activities is more or less tactical, it cannot be denied that these social movements sincerely accept, at least in part, the pacifistic *Weltanschauung*, from whence comes the claim that pacifism is a genuine moral standpoint. This claim seems dubious or problematic, and my aim in this article will be to show that the pretension of pacifism to be a genuine moral standpoint is unnecessary for the justification of the pacifists' political ends and activities.

Most people regard not only defence, but to some extent revenge (as well as punishment in the retributive sense), as morally justified. Many will plead for prevention not only of violence, but of all forbidden actions. What is common to all these positions is that violence is regarded as evil, but on this point they are not in accord with pacifism: according to them the use of violence under certain conditions is indeed justified. The viewpoint according to which prevention is justified is sometimes conceived in such a way that the aim of final elimination of violence is transformed into an almost unlimited justification of the use of violence; for example, in some revolutionary doctrines any violence is justified if it aims at the final elimination of the conditions for the existence of violence. Punishment is justified by similar arguments; partly by the same justification regarding its purpose, and partly by reference to the assumption that the negative value of two acts of violence (crime and punishment as one whole) is lesser than the negative value of either of them taken by itself (e.g. crime without punishment). Finally, defence (or self-defence) must not be confused with either punishment or prevention: it is an immediate reaction to violence which it is supposed to prevent, but its immediate purpose is not the prevention of violence as such, but preservation of some particular value which is threatened (e.g. life, dignity, physical integrity). It is not an accident that pacifism is characterised in terms of rejection and abandonment of defence. One who rejects defence, to be consistent, must reject punishment as well, and above all prevention. Hence, a pacifist is one who holds violence to be such an evil that he even ought to refrain from defence. The contrary, however, does not hold: one who accepts defence, but rejects prevention (and/or punishment) cannot be called a pacifist. Namely, he cannot develop his position simply on the basis of the attitude towards violence, but must (and, as we shall see, can) provide an independent reason (or reasons) for his different treatment of violence as it appears in defence and as it appears in prevention (and/or punishment).

Now, the question is whether it is possible to defend the position of abstaining from defence. What does such an abstinence involve? Well, it certainly involves the decision to abstain from defending oneself (in the circumstances when defence may seem appropriate). But this decision may be made on the basis of at least two kinds of considerations. First, it can be

the decision to give up defence in some specific situation when one is really under attack. This decision, for example, may have various causes. Its cause may be fear. Or it may be the opinion that showing one's firm intention to abstain from defending himself will make an impression on the attacker, make the attacker feel ashamed or in some other way be too inhibited to pursue his malicious goals; and, as we all know, this strategy is the best defence in some cases. Is this behaviour in any relevant sense pacifist? One can mistakenly estimate what the best tactic in fact is, and, as it often happens, contrary to one's intentions, encourage the attack. What should one do next time he finds himself in a similar situation? Next time the situation, circumstances or one's mood may be different, and so the estimate of the best tactic as well. It seems obvious that the decision to abstain from defence which is a result of tactical estimates is not compatible with pacifism. A decision compatible with pacifism cannot be instantaneous, but must be based on some principle. But if this decision is to be based on some principle, what must be the nature of that principle? One might, of course, decide never to defend oneself. A smoker or a kleptomaniac can in the same manner firmly decide to end his regrettable practice. Some other person, again, can decide to fast every Wednesday or not to eat meat at all. Let us grant that the four of them live up to their decisions. This is not enough, however, to regard these practices as having moral justification. For these practices to be morally justified, it is necessary that they may be universalized, and this means that it can be rightfully expected that they may be performed by everyone: in this respect, one who decides to be truthful or honest is in a much better position. In our last example, the man who chooses to fast every Wednesday cannot expect nor require others to conform with his practice; similarly, if I decide never to defend myself whatever the circumstances I do not have the right to expect, and even less to require, from others to follow me and abstain from defending themselves when they need it.

The decisions of the smoker, the kleptomaniac, the man who would not eat on Wednesdays and the like may lack moral justification; they are vows in Gandhi's sense, hence some sort of oath to oneself. I believe that precisely the non-universalizability of the pacifistic claim is the major source of the tendency to institutionalize pacifism as a social movement (sects, societies, associations): non-universalizability makes of pacifism, as it were, a private enterprise and thus the validity of its claims necessarily discriminatory - they are binding only for those who already accept pacifism. Hence, its acceptance is a matter of private choice. This, in turn, means that the moral right, i.e., the right to defence, has a primacy with regard to the private character of any involvement with a pacifist movement. The general character of the relation between private and universal claims means that at best the pacifist position is permissible. Of course, axiologically this is very weak: permissibility has its limitations (if you are not a pacifist you have a right to blame your pacifist friend - and even to end the friendship, e.g., because he failed to defend you from a rapist); furthermore, it is often morally indifferent; and finally, even supererogatory acts (e.g., heroic ones) are only permissible.

The right to defence, however, is not just permissible: it is everyone's right and not just of some who carry a special vow. But, the right to decline or simply to fail to use the right to defence must also be universally acknowledged; and this does not imply any particular attitude towards pacifism, (except, of course, that it is permissible) for the right to decline or wave a right follows from the concept of a right itself. There is no obligation to exercise rights. They are rather unlike duties which, unless they are annulled must be fulfilled. There are cases, I believe, in which a person is in some sense under the obligation to defend himself, although this would not follow from his right to self-defence, but rather from the character of the content of the value which is put in danger, e.g., some absolute value such as dignity.

From the fact that the moral right to defence has such a primacy it follows, then, that it may not be wrong<sup>2</sup> to respond to violence with force, if that is the only or the best possible defence. An argument for such a view is advanced by Narveson who examines the question of how much force one may be justified in exercising in defence, and the answer he gives is both simple and precise: 'Enough'.<sup>3</sup> On first sight this may seem overpermissive, but it is not. Independently, from all other consequences, which are accidental to violence, e.g., pain, what is morally contestable in violence is coercion, that is the restriction of freedom. However, an act of restricting one's freedom, even if it is coercive, does not have to be a violent act: to be violent an act must be, at least in part, directed to the restriction of one's freedom - i.e., have the latter as a part of its objective - while a non-violent act of restricting one's freedom, even if it is coercive, produces the latter only as a side-effect. Natural laws or unintentional acts are not the origin of violence. To have a right implies the right to do whatever is necessary to prevent the infringement of that right.<sup>4</sup> But if rational arguments or simple appeal to a right were always sufficient to prevent infringements of rights, i.e., if rights were violated only as a result of ignorance or misunderstanding, then violence would not exist and the pacifist way of speaking of rights would, therefore, lose its meaning. If this were true, that is, if rights were violated only as a result of ignorance or misunderstanding, any infringement of a right of mine could not be a consequence of a violent act; namely, if I have been in the position to present rational arguments or appeal to that right, the infringement of it would not even have had occurred. It is because this counterfactual is true (under the specified condition) that the act of infringement of the right in question cannot qualify as an act of violence. Since there is no violence, what then would be the point of the pacifist's rejecting one's right to defend himself from violence? Consequently, it is not only empirically probable that what is necessary to prevent the infringement of some right requires the employment of force, but this is a logical consequence of a conceptual analysis of the 'infringement of a right': precisely this infringement involves violence.<sup>5</sup> Whether the force needed to prevent violence is actual physical force depends, of course, on empirical conditions.

Here we may invoke Hobbes. In the natural state as described by Hobbes there is a war of all against all; this fluid state of 'war' is not, however, a real war, but only a metaphor for some state which is not a social state, which does not possess social presuppositions for the minimum of confidence, and hence here the state of peace is not only empirically impossible, but, what is more, inconceivable. So it follows that the concept of peace is meaningful only in the civil state, the state which is defined in terms of rights. This in turn means that peace, and hence the pacifist attitude as well, require a number of normative conditions, but this, of course, is not by itself an argument against pacifism. The existence of state, marriage, time-tables, etc., presupposes a series of normative or conventional conditions, but this is not an argument either for nor against those institutions. However, this does go against an argument which is sometimes offered in support of pacifism. According to the argument, the pacifist position is a matter of natural law or an expression of some kind of natural right to life; hence the resulting prohibition on taking another's life. Murder or rape, as well as fraudulence or malice are not unnatural but immoral.

One of the possible explanations for pacifist's belief that the use of physical force is always morally wrong is perhaps the fact that it presupposes action (presumably evil action), therefore an active, i.e., blameful, position, while inaction (as sufferance of evil), as a passive position, is presumably always blameless. Two objections may be advanced against such a view of 'clean hands and clear conscience', according to which evil must never - 'even if the heavens fall' - be done. The first has already been mentioned the impossibility of it becoming the subject of a universal moral obligation. Its maximalistic requirements make its universalization impossible. However, since the pacifist claim is permissible, and hence at least *prima facie* legitimate, the above objection must not be understood as a condemnation of political or religious movements guided by the pacifist ideal: for the constitution of such movements and their goals permissibility is quite sufficient. The objection concerns only the moral aspects of the pacifist claim. The second objection concerns the definition of 'evil' adopted by pacifists. They identify 'evil' with the use of physical force, and although this definition logically commits them to regarding the latter as the sole evil in this world, they typically perceive the use of physical force only as the worst of all evils. Pacifistic claims oscillate between these two theses. The second, weaker thesis presupposes the belief in a hierarchy of evils such that the use of physical force is the worst of all of them; that which would count as a conclusive rejection of this thesis will, *ipso facto*, rule out the stronger one. The following two objections are perhaps serious enough to refute the weaker thesis. First, it is not clear how such a hierarchy of values (evils) with respect to the content is to be constructed.<sup>6</sup> The second objection questions the thesis that the use of physical force may be determined on *a priori* grounds as the worst evil. Besides the fact that coercion must not be physical and that physical force may not be the most effective sort of coercion, it is not, in this context, entirely clear why it

should be possible to determine on a priori grounds that acts of coercion are necessarily more evil than acts of deprivation. The difference between actions and omissions can be of no use here, for to refer to any characterization of the content of coercion, e.g., that it is physical, is to transform the question of general evaluation into the question of evaluating specific types of acts (i.e., those involving physical force), that is, into the question of judging the lesser evil. And on this level, the level of specific evaluation, the difference between coercion and deprivation is lost. Deprivation is not just an omission, it is much more than that, it requires the agent to take, as it were, an active role; for this reason deprivation belongs to the category of actions rather than omissions. Furthermore, in drawing the distinction, within the concept of action itself, between coercion and deprivation, physical force is only a part of one side of this dichotomy; that some cases of deprivation are wrong in the same sense in which physical force may be wrong should be obvious. Moreover, there are instances of coercion which do not have to involve physical force, for example, different types of manipulation, and they may be wrong in just the same way that physical force is. The content of the notion of manipulation clearly suggests that, in principle, there is no reason to distinguish between coercion and deprivation solely on the basis of their degrees of evil: manipulation may equally consist of coercion or deprivation, both in its mechanism and in its final result. From all this it follows that to place physical force at the top of the pyramid of evils, as the pacifist does, is arbitrary and is a matter of his subjective choice, i.e., his private matter.<sup>7</sup>

Now we can consider the question of whether accepting pacifistic principles could perhaps be regarded as an act of supererogation. The value of supererogatory actions is precisely in that they exceed that which may be universally required. But an action of that kind has its value only as an act of an individual; it is impossible, and even if it were possible it would be morally impermissible, to single out beforehand a specific class of people which would then be, as a result of accepting a particular set of normative principles, under the obligation to perform supererogatory actions. Apart from the moral impermissibility of prescribing supererogatory actions as such which would conflict with the right of one to have the scope of his duties determined with a significant degree of precision, which is in turn a necessary condition for the very possibility of supererogatory actions. This has an axiologically strange consequence: can we imagine a brotherhood of heroes the member of which you become by making a vow that you will perform heroic deeds. It is hypocritical and morally paradoxical to set such a goal for oneself: in the very act of setting such a goal this goal is degraded.

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At the social and political level pacifism emerges as a practical idea which then requires from anyone to make one's mind with respect to it. Because pacifism excludes precisely the most effective means of achieving standard political aims, this means that majority of political systems and doctrines are in the position that they must state and defend their negative attitude towards it. Thus, for instance, Marxists have regarded pacifism as a part of an antirevolutionary, bourgeois ideology and even as 'the twin of fascism' (Stalin). On the other hand, despite their tendency to project the image of their religion as a religion of peace, Christians had supported the abstinence from the use of force only for a short period; immediately after its official recognition, in the year 313, the church changed its mind and rejected the pacifistic doctrine, introducing at the same time, the doctrine of just and unjust wars.

The criticism of pacifism at this, social, level depends on two major factors: the critic's attitude towards society and social questions in general and the definition of pacifism itself. The first is not theoretically interesting in the context of the present paper; the critic's moral views may, of course, be relevant, but not his political views, except to the extent that they are implications of his moral views. But the different meanings associated with the concept of pacifism and the difference in political programs following from them may provide theoretical reasons for criticism and practical reasons for adopting specific attitudes towards a movement which defines itself as pacifistic or is perceived as such. Almost everyone would agree with the condemnation of violence and war, if this condemnation means the preference of peace to war. But hardly anyone would unconditionally accept the rejection of defence. In the case of war, a consistent pacifist, given his condemnation and rejection of any but non-violent involvement in war, is committed to rejecting any ethics of war and, just like the extreme war-apologist, will not be in the position to set any moral limits in conducting wars. The pacifist will simply not be able to separate various acts in war according to different degrees of their moral wrongness. For, according to him, all such acts are absolutely impermissible. This, furthermore, means that a consistent pacifist will not be able, in a concrete situation, to make distinctions between things that ought to be distinguished and that he will reject them in the same manner and with the same rigour and inflexibility. In the case of an organized pacifist movement its members will oppose, without discrimination, different phenomena which, although perhaps all wrong, do not have to be equally wrong and hence intolerable to the same degree.

Moral puritanism exhibited in such an extreme attitude has as its consequence the impossibility of distinguishing between the acts of torture, war-crimes or genocide, on the one hand, and taking part in a war, killing in self-defence or even taking weapons in one's hands, on the other. If we were to evaluate this world on the model of some ideal perfect world, then, of course, none of these acts could count as good or desirable. However, such an idealisation is morally entirely fruitless unless it offers not simply a way

of determining whether an act or state of affairs conforms to its ideal content, but also a practical mechanism which will make it possible to see which act, among those which do not conform to their ideal content, is better or worse. Basing one's position on the conditions which do not exist and perhaps are only logically possible, but in fact will never actually exist in our imperfect world, is not only morally futile but at the same time methodologically untenable. Social movements which adopt and essentially depend on some such idealisation, and as a result have set maximalistic demands, despite their likely militancy, will never be able to impose themselves on to the totality of a society for good. These movements may exist only as isolated organisations, sects, etc., in the midst of the rest of the world (we may perhaps say, against a backdrop of 'normal' people) and if it happens that they succeed in imposing their views in the form of a prevailing religion or ideology, very soon they have to introduce differences in the scope of their demands, which means that their initial maximalistic demand becomes void: they now abandon ordinary people and preserve their grand demands only for the 'chosen' few. Bogomiles are a good example, but, of course, not the only one.

Another general problem which has immediate, although not necessarily negative, consequences is the problem of predicting or calculating the chances of a social project's success. This problem is much more complex than the similar problem concerning individual projects. It has been claimed earlier that such calculations represent a tactical rather than a moral viewpoint. But at the social level this is not necessarily so. If the prediction is that a certain action (e.g., a widespread and organised civil disobedience, boycott, strike, etc.) is likely to bring about the desired result then the decision to carry it out ceases to be (just) a tactical and often becomes a moral question as well. However, a question arises of why the decision would have moral significance if the likelihood for the success of the given action is high and would have no moral significance if the likelihood is low or indeterminate. This clearly shows the difference between the individual and social level: something which at the individual level may be wrong (degrading or something that cannot be recommended as a general practice, for instance, to decline the demand to have one's rights respected), may at the social and political level, where the question regarding the consequences of one's decisions has different import, not only be permitted (as at the individual level) but morally recommendable and in some circumstances even obligatory. What will count as permissible or recommendable at the political or social level - regardless of what it may represent at the individual level - is an empirical question. To fail to do away with some evil at the social level may be morally wrong, yet its elimination may require disregard for some legitimate individual interests and itself be a source of coercion. What form this will take in a concrete situation will depend largely on the situation itself and, of course, on the corresponding estimates. The consequence of all this for the subject of this paper is that possible justification or desirability of pacifistic practice does not follow from the pacifistic principle as such, but is the consequence of the structure of a particular

social and political situation wherein pacifism just happens to have a role corresponding to its goals.

As a political movement, pacifism often relies on such calculations. Since its goal is peace, it can not, and has not excluded considerations of determining the methods and estimating the likelihood of attaining peace and in particular, world-peace. Ideas of how to achieve this goal have been various. One of them was an optimistic or quasi-optimistic vision that the development of weaponry and destructive techniques will gradually lead to dissolution of war. The second, more interesting and for mankind more challenging one, was the idea of the world becoming one state. So Bertrand Russell, who in 1918, spent six months in jail because he propagated resistance to conscription, in the midst of World War I (in 1916) wondered whether it had been better to ensure universal peace even at the price of the supremacy of one power, that is Germany.<sup>8</sup> Had Napoleon managed to conquer Europe and Great Britain, thought Russell, the world would have been happier, more civilized and the peace would have reigned. National freedom, the freedom of states, would have been indeed sacrificed, but freedom of the individual would thus have had its chance, for exactly the existence of national states and economic nationalism which follows from it (and in Russell's opinion, this is the dominant force of our time), represent the main cause of war, and war eliminates the very conditions for the existence of human freedom. This is not, of course, the place for a detailed discussion of the concept of the World-state, hence I shall only pose a few obvious questions. Is it possible to accomplish the unification of the world in one state on the voluntary basis or is it, on the other hand, necessary that there be a supremacy of one (or perhaps two) superpowers? In this latter case, the question arises of whether such a union based on subjugation or on a balance of deterrence would have any value. The answer to this question would also provide the answer to the question of whether this would be the way to obtain the pacifistic ideal of world-peace.

To elaborate on this point, let us consider an example of how some singularly valuable things may be obtained just as a side-effect of some activity the purpose of which was something entirely different. Hegemonistic policy may in fact lead to the realisation of peace, or even universal peace, but this desideratum, although it may appear on the list of proclaimed goals, is never that which motivates the launching of that policy. Suppose that some nation believed in its mission to rule the world, then the world-peace would have been just a side-effect, were this mission to be fulfilled.

Now, the essential question regarding the idea of world-state is whether such a product would warrant more freedom and creativity, and less disrespect for laws, or whether it would be a large-scale tyranny. There can be no priori answer to this question, but there is no obvious reason why the world-state should be in any way special with regard to existing national states: whether it be an empire or a federation<sup>9</sup> the world-state can just as well turn out to be a tyranny - so the same patterns of social and political

organization are open to the world-state as to the existing national states. This means that the universal peace, even if it is generally a better alternative, is not necessarily a good alternative. We may imagine a scenario wherein of two power blocks one was disposed to such a degree of fanaticism that it would prefer the destruction of the world to a compromise; then a pacifist, like Russell, would have to categorically demand that the other block yield and capitulate. Suppose, furthermore, that those before whom the capitulation is demanded are the Nazis. Is yielding or capitulating before a blackmail really the right choice, on the assumption that the destruction of the world is not just among the preferences of the fanatics but also in the scope of outcomes they are actually capable to bring about?

It is not, however, certain that indulgence and passive resistance will make the impression on the aggressor. The answer that it may, besides the fact that it may be given by anyone and not just by the pacifist, is inadequate; on the other hand, the pacifist's answer that it will may be a mere expression of his craving that it be that way. This latter answer, just as the widespread belief (or prejudice) that the balance of power and deterrence implicitly assumes that neither side has aggressive intentions for the role of increasing armament is not aggression but deterrence; this means in the case of pacifism that every assault is somehow provoked. However, if this were true then what appears perfectly rational in the case of nuclear weapons, i.e., unilateral disarmament,<sup>10</sup> would be so in the case of any other weapons too. This is where the weakness of pacifism lies. Pacifism, simply put, does not always work; pacifist position becomes meaningless in the case when the oppressor is ruthless and fanatic. Thus, even when resistance is most urgent it will be condemned by the pacifist. How is it possible for pacifists to prepare to refrain from resisting even when resistance is most urgent? It seems that pacifists are so psychologically constituted that for them any violence,<sup>11</sup> is absolutely unbearable. In order to see what it is exactly that is unbearable for the pacifist we must understand what he means by 'violence'. There are only two possibilities consistent with his position. He may mean 'violence in which he takes an active part' or he may mean that violence by definition is something that includes resistance; in the latter case it would be sufficient to refrain from resistance to make a given act non-violent. The second possibility is clearly unsatisfactory because as a definition it seems counter-intuitive, while the first is just the consequence of a certain psychological state. (This does not strike me as a promising line either, but may deserve further investigation). In neither case have we been given sufficient grounds for some moral or philosophical viewpoint; hence, we are left with nothing which could require moral (or philosophical) justification.

Concerning the first meaning of 'violence' one can also ask how it is possible that the pacifist can adopt such a partial and selfish viewpoint so that something is violence only if he takes part in it? The reason may be his refusal to share responsibility for some painful events that have happened. After horrid experiences, e.g., the World War II, moral recovery may appear

difficult to achieve, but to the pacifist it may be even unthinkable, so that, according to him, in the light of what has happened, peaceful, non-resistant surrender would have been better than resistance and war. So, contrary to what may be expected, the pacifist is here more alike to those who 'remember' rather than those who are 'forward oriented'. It is as if pacifists, with their limitless faith in the rightfulness and purposefulness of 'turning the other cheek' and the possibility of prevention of 'the worst', tacitly fear that the faculty on which this possibility is based is not all that well ingrained in human nature. Incapable of admitting this, they suppress this problem and cover it with a surplus of eagerness. This, of course, does not mean that pacifists are insincere or cowards, nor that the evil ought not to be fought at all. Evil ought to be confronted, if for no other reason, in order not to be ashamed for what other people have done and to spare ourselves the hatred and will for vengeance. All such reasons are perfectly legitimate, just as selfish (on the condition that they do not harm others) or supererogatory motives are. But unless it is highly probable that pacifist's course of action will produce the desired effect on the intruder, his procedure becomes meaningless.

It may be replied, however, that should the pacifist's attitude in a given circumstance prove insufficient as an assault deterrent, this nevertheless, would not mean that it is meaningless, for the purpose of this attitude is, as it were, limited to the pacifist himself: his respect for, e.g., the principle that it is better to die than to kill a man, or the principle (which Gandhi adopted) that the opposition to evil is to be accompanied by good-will rather than by hatred and revenge. But these are all two-place relations: 'taming' of a thunderbolt by lightning-rod or of a river by embankment is only a metaphor which does not involve either revenge or good-will, for there is no one towards whom these attitudes would be expressed; if one kills an infuriated bear which attacked him, we shall not call this murder or revenge. Moreover, Gandhi's kindheartedness towards his enemy has its purpose precisely in making him ashamed, that is, in a successful demonstration of the peculiar moral strength inherent in passive resistance; and, therefore, in issuing a warning the role of which is to remind the assailant of his potential humanity. But this means that the goal of pacifistic action is not limited solely to the pacifist himself, but on the contrary, that it is primarily directed to the assailant. However, if the assailant is not to be treated as an end in itself, or perhaps ought not to be treated so because of his unscrupulousness and fanaticism (which reveal his inability to show any respect for that which is universally human), then the pacifistic attitude gets divorced from the sole condition which would give it a (possible) purpose, and becomes pointless. In such a case, then, resistance is not only justified in the form of defence, but a counterattack (and sometimes perhaps even the preventive attack) is also justified. Readiness to defend oneself functions as a potential warning to the aggressor as to what is at stake. But, of course, resistance is justified primarily as defence: not only that there is nothing wrong in not suffering injustice, but injustice ought not to be suffered or tolerated. To advocate patience (as a form of

tolerance), which is a standard way of expressing the pacifist attitude, can be justified in this context only conditionally, and on the assumption that patience will not have to last for ever, that is, for an unreasonably long time.

Now there is a practical question as to whether pacifists, as people with special duties, have perhaps some special rights with respect to war?<sup>12</sup> I have tried to demonstrate earlier that there cannot be special duties, i.e., duties which, disguised as moral duties, would pertain only to members of a certain organisation who gave a special oath. But some organization may prescribe to its members some special obligations, simply because they are members and on the basis of the oath they have given; and in the case that nothing is required by the oath which is in conflict with morality such obligations may be perfectly legitimate and even stimulating. Thus, it is a fact that various beneficial organizations or institutions have the capacity to motivate their members to great efforts in trying to achieve the ends which must be regarded by everyone as honorable and good, hence increasing significantly the likelihood of those ends being in fact achieved. It is not sufficient to be a missionary to be Mother Theresa, but it is not an accident that Mother Theresa is a missionary. Opposition to war, especially if it is massive, can surely give significant results. Moreover, there is no need for a special social organization to make it obligatory for one to oppose war, it is sufficient that one agrees with Tolstoy that the duty of conscience is higher and more important than other duties; and if one's conscience forbids one's participation in a war, then this cannot be condemned. In some countries here there are even laws concerning this. But there arises an almost technical question: how are we to know whether someone opposes his participation in a war because of his conscience or some other reason? Of course, this question is of no great moral importance, for other reasons may be equally legitimate (for instance, why should one whose conscience, whatever it is, forbids him to participate in a war be released from the obligation to participate, while one who must care for a sick wife and six children be treated as a deserter? But where to place a limit?). Given that what is here at stake is life itself - that which is a necessary condition for the realization of any other values - it is not at all necessary to advocate pacifist views on life as an absolute and ultimate value; it is sufficient that one has more important goals than the ones for which the war is waging, to be in the position to employ rational arguments (that is without becoming a pacifist and without giving an oath) against the view that war is the way to solve human conflicts. This, however, requires further explanation; for a person need not have any concrete, materially determined aims in order to reject this particular way of solving conflicts. Moreover, it may be said that there is, at least in a prima facie sense, a moral duty to reject war as the way of solving conflicts; it cannot be a part of a moral purpose of a man or a nation to put himself or itself in such a contingent and arbitrary situation. But as with any other prima facie obligation this obligation may be overridden. However, a complication crops up here: the other obligation does not have to be the overriding one, it may simply be such that it (as a

value) justifies the use of the given, i.e., violent, way of solving conflicts (as, e.g., in self-defence). In that case, the agent, although he prima facie condemns such a way of solving conflicts, will approve of war (i.e., he will not recommend capitulation), but this does not mean that by doing so he automatically ought to sacrifice his other goals and report himself as a volunteer. The issue is complex and it implies that not only in the case of a war of which I do not approve, but even in the case of war of which I do approve, I may still claim that the war does not concern me so much that it would be my duty to take part in it. Of course, the question of the legitimacy of decisions made on the basis of such attitudes is a new, complex question which implies or presupposes answers to a host of other questions; above all, the question of moral foundation of political obligations, and related to this, the question regarding possible rights and obligations concerning loyalty, civil disobedience and uprising, rebellion or revolution. What seems certain, however, is that pacifism has no moral foundation, either at the individual level or as a social movement. That is, it is neither morally obligatory nor morally impermissible. So its possible value (or negative value) derives from contingent features of a specific social situation, which in turn, are to a large extent a matter of personal or political assessment. Peace, although a universal human end, and so the subject of everyone's moral obligation, would have to be the absolute end in itself, the ultimate end, for pacifism to become an obligatory moral viewpoint. As it stands, it is not necessary to be a pacifist in order for one to plead for peace.

## NOTES

- \* I am indebted to Nikola Grahek and Aleksandar Jokić, the latter not only for his help in translation but also for many helpful comments.
- 1. Cf. J. Narveson, 'Pacifism: A Philosophical Analysis', Ethics 75 (1964/5) 4.
- 2. I say 'may' because I allow for such cases wherein it is not appropriate to answer violence with force because of the presence of some overriding reason; for example, in parent-child relation, when the child is unjustly inflicted with physical pain, e.g., as a result of a mistaken judgment, it would be inappropriate for the child to respond with force to this act of violence, because of the hierarchical nature of the parent-child relation; that is, because of an external and independent reason. Similarly, when someone takes part in some cult ritual (e.g., religious one) consisting in whipping, without sincerely accepting the whole institution and hence disbelieving the supposed sacred nature of the ritual, but nevertheless decides to take part in it for, say,



careeristic, patriotic, or other tactical reasons; because of the insincere acceptance of the whipping ceremony, the whipping becomes an act of violence, but because of the voluntary participation in the ceremony it would be inappropriate to answer whipping with force.

3. Ct. Narveson, op.c., p. 268.
4. Ibid., p. 266.
5. Note that a restriction on one's freedom does not presuppose violence whereas an infringement of a right does, i.e., a non-violent infringement of a right is impossible.
6. For an argument that such a construction is impossible see my Kant i Scheler, ICC, Beograd 1986, especially chs. III and V.
7. Cf. supra, pp. 6-7. 59-60.
8. Cf. B. Russell, Why Men Fight: A Method of Abolishing the International Duel, New York, The Century Company 1917, p. 98.
9. On an idea of world-federation see I. Kant, On Eternal Peace.
10. Nuclear weapons are of no use for purposes of conquest.
11. But recall that the pacifist's claim, most likely, is that violence is the sole evil, and not just the worst of all evils. See the distinction between the strong and weak thesis, supra, p. 61.
12. Cf. e.g. C. Ihara, 'In Defence of a Version of Pacifism', Ethics 88 (1978) 4.